estimates are expected to conform; or rather that sum would be found insufficient. May there, then, not be a mistake? Has not the printer inadvertently put a cypher too much, and thereby converted eight hundred into eight thousand persons? Could the speakers at public meetings make themselves heard to a concourse of so many thousand people?

Besides this unusually capacious "hall," the number of separate business offices, and other rooms, a spacious council-chamber included, which architects are expected to provide, is so considerable as to render the arranging them within such compass as would not be thought extravagant, a very difficult task. Now, if the committee can prevail upon contractors and builders to perform their part—to furnish materials and labour, upon terms exactly in proportion to those which they in their liberality deem sufficient remuneration to an architect for doing everything except actually superintending the execution of the works,—why, perhaps the sum named as the maximum of expenditure might be found sufficient, because it would in fact be tantamount to one nearly ten times as much.

After all,—this remark comes from a friend who happens to be at my elbow,—the committee are not quite so stingy and inconsiderate as you take them to be. No doubt they reason thus: an architect may be very well content with a couple of hundred pounds for a couple of months' labour. That is paying him at the rate of 1,200*l.* a year; and surely the professional man who can make that, to say nothing of any little jobs at intervals to fill up his odds and ends of time, has no very great cause to complain. "Don't you see?" exclaims my friend. Certainly I do: I clearly see the *reductio ad absurdum*: I see through the pretended seriousness of your look, and detect the glance of satirical irony which is lurking in your eye. Q. E. D.

Another correspondent on this subject says: "The borough surveyor prepared plans for the said building some nine months ago, and which at that time received the board's sanction, and I am now given to understand that a new set of plans has been in preparation for the last six weeks,—by whom I have not yet ascertained; and this is the reason why the time for receiving the drawings cannot be extended, and the scale reduced."

## THE NEW COMMISSION OF SEWERS.

ANOTHER Metropolitan Commission of Sewers has held its opening meeting at Greek-street, Soho. Our readers, however, will be sadly mistaken should they imagine that surely something therefore will now at last be done, after three botched commissions have been duly disposed of, and a fourth—attempt shall we say—made to carry out the one great object of all these appointments. The present commission, according to its own chairman, Mr. Jebb, "is only provisional, being merely in a state of transition to a more satisfactory footing and a better basis!" The grub of the sewer fly has but one chrysalistic state to pass through ere it be fairly afloat, but an incipient sewer commission, it appears, has four, at least; and it is hard to say how many more.

The first general court of new commissioners was held on Saturday afternoon, Mr. Jebb presiding. Present, also, Sir J. Burgoyne, Sir C. Fellowes, Major Dawson, Captain Vetch, Mr. G. Baker, Mr. J. Hawkshaw, Mr. W. Hosking, Mr. H. A. Hunt, Mr. L. Redhead, and Mr. G. S. Smith.

Major Dawson explained that the one great object of their appointment from the first had been to devise and execute important drainage works for the improvement of the sanitary condition of this great metropolis, and that it was never meant that the time of the commission should be occupied with mere ordinary details of drainage, for then there would be no necessity for the appointment of such men as Sir J. Burgoyne, and other gentlemen of the greatest eminence in the engineering profession;—that the real secret of their inability to carry out this one great object was the want of power,—of pecuniary power, men of capital having had no faith in the security of their funds, if lent for this great public purpose;—that the Government promised to obtain them adequate power, but so far from having ever got it, even the power they had, to fix a shilling rate, was taken away, or at least reduced to a threepenny one;—that the sixpenny rate afterwards restored to them was not sufficient to enable them even to carry out urgent minor or local works long since resolved on. The estimate for the general system was, he believed, 1,080,000*l.*: their present debt was, in round numbers, 36,000*l.*: the demands for works of great urgency in course of the year amounted to about 380,000*l.*—available balance for this purpose only 90,000*l.*; so that, in effect, at the time of the expiration of the term of the new commission's office, continued the Chairman, "if we have done all in our power to do, we shall still leave undone works of great urgency and importance, to the amount, in round numbers, of 290,000*l.* or equal to the amount of another 8*d.* rate," those works being merely part of the radii of the great system of arterial drainage, not even then begun, though in plan decided on. In the estimate the charge of 24,000*l.* for the Ordnance survey is not included, the Board having been very indulgent hitherto.

The Chairman concluded his explanation by saying that, "unless further powers be given by the Government and the Legislature, either by increasing the Commission's powers of rating or of obtaining money by loan or otherwise, it is absolutely impossible, putting the general drainage out of the question, beyond the limits indicated, that you can carry out any great drainage works or even works of any ordinary nature, let their urgency be ever so great."

Such is the hopeful state of our thrice new commission.

Sir J. Burgoyne concurred in the explanation, but, what is more, added his conviction that the commission is even yet "not properly organised for the work it has to do!" And, in truth, he might have still further added that some even of its individual members are not "properly organised" for it,—more than one of them being quite unfit for such work as it has—or ought to have—to do.

The Chairman finally remarked that he had no doubt the Government would consider the subject so as to give them power, in course of the ensuing session of Parliament, to do their duty to the public in a satisfactory manner.

## THE NEW CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE directors of the New Crystal Palace Company commenced the building on Thursday, the 5th inst. very auspiciously. A large number of influential persons assembled on the ground: the sun shone out on one of the finest views in the country; and the first column was raised amidst plaudits and congratulations. At the dinner, Mr. Laing, the chairman; Mr. Scott Russell; Mr. Peto, and others, made very able addresses; and the applause of 500 or 600 persons assembled beneath the tent, showed their appreciation of the enlightened views with which the directors commence their arduous and extraordinary work. Sir Charles Lyell responded for the literary and scientific men who were present as visitors, and alluded happily to the reference to the advancement of science and art made in the last Royal speech. The continued want of appreciation in this respect stamped us forcibly when the reporter of a leading newspaper, who sat near us, closed his book when Sir Charles began, with, "Oh, d—n the literaries!" For shame, Press! For shame! Call you this standing by your order?

The building itself will be a great improvement on the old building, presenting three transepts instead of one, and an arched nave. The fall of the ground on one side has led to a clever arrangement of the building on that side, with deep recesses in the ends of the transepts, and an open corridor, the whole length of the intermediate parts, containing sculpture. Within there will be, as we said sometime ago, courts fitted up to illustrate the architecture of the various periods of the world's history, including an Egyptian, Grecian, Roman, Byzantine, Alhambraic, Mediæval, Renaissance, and Elizabethan Courts, each under the direction of competent men. If carried out as proposed, and there seems no reason to doubt, it will be the most extraordinary structure in the world; and we say heartily with the chairman, SUCCESS TO THE PALACE OF THE PEOPLE.

## CARVED PANELS—THE SCUOLA DI SAN MARCO, VENICE.

THE Scuola di San Marco, at Venice, now converted into a hospital, was built towards the close of the fifteenth century by Martino Lombardo, architect, the former building having been destroyed by fire. In the entrance-hall, a double row of fine stone columns, with pilasters at each end, the end walls, support the floor of the large room above. The caps of these columns, and the bas-reliefs on each side of all the pedestals, are very delicately executed. Two examples of the panels of the pedestals are shown by the accompanying drawing. E. H. M.

## BUILDERS' BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION.

THE fifth annual general meeting of the subscribers to this valuable charity, which was founded for the purpose of giving relief to aged and decayed members of the building trade, was held on the 29th ult. at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate-street, for the purpose of receiving the report of the directors, and upon other business,—Mr. Thomas Piper, jun. in the chair.

The Chairman, in an appropriate speech, called the attention of the subscribers to the progress the charity was making, and expressed a hope that they would not relax in their exertions to extend its benefits. After alluding to the establishment of a district, he concluded by calling upon the secretary to read the report.

Mr. A. G. Harris, the secretary, read the report, which stated that the society, during the past year, had made very satisfactory progress, and that, owing to the increased support received, the directors had been enabled materially to increase both the number of their pensioners and the amount of Three per Cent. Stock. The total number of pensioners now upon the funds of the society is fifteen, viz. ten men and five women; but there are still a large number waiting to be elected. The ball held at Willis's Rooms in aid of the charity had been very successful, there being an increase of receipts over last year of 17*l.* 17*s.* 8*d* (making a profit of 137*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*). Since the last annual meeting a new bye-law had been passed, extending the benefits of the institution to the provinces, and very gratifying results had already sprung from the commencement at Brighton, where a local committee had been formed. An alteration had also been made in the rules for the purpose of allowing unsuccessful candidates to carry their votes forward until finally successful. The report having announced that Mr. Peto had consented to act as president for the ensuing year, concluded by calling upon the supporters and well wishers of the charity to continue their support, and to use their endeavours to extend the benefits of the institution. The balance-sheet showed the total amount received to have been 1,321*l.* 5*s.* 4*d.* and after all the necessary expenses had been defrayed there was left a balance in hand of 21*l.* 12*s.* 6½*d.*

The report having been moved, was carried *nem. con.*

A vote of thanks having been passed to the committee and to Mr. George Bird, the treasurer, a similar compliment was passed to the chairman, and the meeting separated.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE.—In addition to the extension of Buckingham Palace on the northern and eastern sides, the greater portion of the area on the south side, forming the site of the old domestic offices, and that part of the Pimlico road which has been added to the Palace grounds, are now being covered with an extensive range of buildings. The Palace gardens have, we understand, been embellished, and decorations have been added, amongst which is an alcove of an octagonal form, 18 feet in diameter, the flooring of which is laid with Orsi's metallic lava. The whole of the works are being constructed by Mr. Cubitt. We are told they comprise a spacious ball-room, with refreshment-rooms, kitchens, and other offices.

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